

Wabash Reflections



News presented by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC).



With Earth Day & Arbor Day this month, fun on the river cannot be too far behind and the Water Trail starts getting use. Now when you paddle the upper Wabash River the flow is still high enough to make for a good current and avoid portages yet has subsided far enough to allow easy clear passage under bridges (check current conditions before you go). Unfortunately, as the longest unimpeded river east of the Mississippi ends its winter flooding, the pre- 'leaf out' banks of the Wabash clearly reflect our societal misdeeds more than at any other time of year. It's a great time to host a "DeTrash the Wabash" and, accordingly, this issue includes a primer on organizing such an event (the highly successful Tippecanoe County model) as well as the usual reflection of an upcoming river event and a little history to bring perspective. Enjoy!

- ❖ A Blueprint for DeTrash the Wabash, Tippecanoe's is May 17th
- ❖ Carroll County's Heritage Transportation Festival to Open Water Trail June 15th
- ❖ Montezuma Once Important Shipping Point
- ❖ Notes and Quotes: On tax reporting by non profits and energy saving.

De-Trash the Wabash – Tippecanoe County to host May 17th Event

borrowed liberally from the 2007 notes of *Rae Schnapp*, Wabash Riverkeeper

A river clean-up is one of the most publicly-supported environmental events within the reach of every group of concerned citizens. Such events have the advantage of being easily organized, well supported by businesses, and a quick few hours for volunteers. As there is no reason to re-invent the wheel, often another group is willing to provide some start-up support (The "Banks of the Wabash, Inc." provides such assistance throughout the Wabash valley) and your group need only touch the local bases for a successful day. Here is a rough primer for how to organize your banks and waterway clean-up.

First, mind your 'p's: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance. Convene a planning group about 90 days before you want to hold your event. Your meeting's agenda will include 'chair' assignments and selecting a date for your event. Select a date – "American Rivers" provides some free trash bags if your cleanup occurs close to National River Cleanup Week in June (a little late for most of Indiana). Assign a member to each of your major

preparation chores: Poke around the cleanup area and note the location of big objects. Pick out and reserve centralized locations for registration as well as the post-event celebration. Place the legal notice in the local paper and apply for your permit from DNR Law Enforcement (if you may have more than 15 watercraft). The exact wording of the legal notice is specified in the application.. Go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/> 'event permit'.

Your second organizing meeting occurs a little over two months out. Since you'll want repeat volunteers in the future, and you need to properly dispose of whatever is collected, start obtaining community support. A repeatable event needs donations of finances (through the books of a supportive non-profit), refreshments, prizes and/or a celebration after (to add a spark of fun) and disposal strategies for all types of collected trash. You'll need "ask" letters to business donors, visits to tire stores so they'll accept and dispose of tires, and a call to the garbage service for a free dumpster and maybe to arrange bagged trash removal. Don't forget restaurants, bakeries, groceries, convenience stores and drug stores, any of which may contribute coffee, bagels, donuts, pizza, sandwiches, ice, water, chips or bug spray. Sponsors are usually noted on flyers and, if your finances make it possible, t-shirts for all attendees. Bright T's work best as color is fun and makes people visible. Consider expected attendees and order more child and lean sizes than the population as a whole. Your local Sheriff and the DNR conservation officer need notice for water safety. Insurance coverage can often be an event rider under a participating non-profit's normal coverage (check with the Hoosier Environmental Council or your local chapter of the Izaak Walton League). Start a "master" first aid kit as well as small kits for group leaders. Look for donated work gloves and reach extending "grabbers" or spindle sticks.

At 30 days out, create your detailed "action" plan, finalize your budget, assign publicity and volunteer recruitment, and follow-up on donations (sponsors should invite their employees). Prepare posters and get them placed. A handout is good for schools, churches and public events. Get on meeting agendas to inform others of the opportunity. Your regional bottler may give you a free banner. A letter to the editor, covering why, who, what, when, and where, may get printed and, with luck, even a pre-event article (suggest a photo at a needy site or create a photo-op).



Your action plan should include each stretch with a designated team leader and meeting the needs of people, trash, and disposal or recycling. Make last minute community requests to make it all happen. Team packets might include their area map and all phone numbers (central control, other leaders, transportation, emergency, tools (brooms, shovels, wire cutters, winch or horse teams) when needed, etc.). Plan your best event photo and notify your local news outlets. Arrange for your own high resolution photos for newsletters, sponsors, and next year's publicity.

As your event nears, print out waivers and sign-in sheets, gather clipboards and pens, finalize your team packets and pick-up snacks, water, gloves, and other supplies. To the limit of funds, purchase what wasn't donated. Get up early on "The Day" and get the coffee, donuts, and ice. Register all attendees by name and contact info and collect waivers. Assign everyone to a team and dispatch, with water, as soon as teams are ready. Ice down drinks and pick-up the post-event food. Take photographs. Have people vie for most unusual trash. Make up fun!

After the event, send out your digital photos and memo on the event to your news outlets. Include all the positive news and quantify the trash. Write a newsletter article for use by participating groups. Return unused purchases. Hold a 'wrap-up' meeting for your core help. Note what worked (and what did not), sign thank-you receipts to sponsors, compare your

expenses to your budget, and inventory what was left over. Arrange for and store durable items for next year. Settle back and bask in your collective good karma!

For more, go to <http://www.hecweb.org/content.cfm?n=wabash> or register an event at http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AR7_NationalRiverCleanup

Carrollton Site hosts Heritage Transportation Festival June 14 & 15

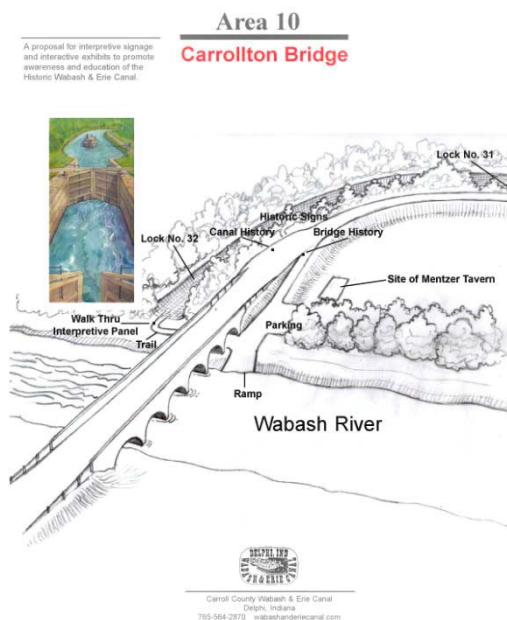
by *Brian Stirm* and *Dan McCain*, Wabash & Erie Canal Association, Carroll County

The 3rd Annual Heritage Transportation Festival in Carroll County has chosen the new Carrollton bridge for one of its venues in order to highlight our State River, the Wabash, and its role as the first “interstate” in Indiana. What better place and time to hold a ceremony christening the Wabash River Water Trail in Carroll County? A program of the Corridor Commission, the water trail will be officially launched on Sunday afternoon, June 15th among other activities rededicating the bridge northeast of Delphi at the 19th century site of Carrollton.

The Delphi Mainstreet Association is the sponsor of the Festival along with the Wabash & Erie Canal Association and the Delphi Municipal Airport. The two day Festival, June 14th & 15th 2008 highlights the Downtown area of Delphi (around the Courthouse Square) and The Wabash and Erie Canal Park on Saturday with fun activities (plus food & music) for all ages including rides in historic vehicles. Local businesses and vendors will display transportation related items too. On Sunday morning the activity moves to the Airport for a flyin-drivein breakfast, lots of fun flying activities, and Carroll Car Club auto show through the lunch hour. By mid afternoon festival action will move to Carrollton for the Bridge dedication, the Water Trail Grand Opening (canoes & kayaks welcome), and ceremonial recognition of land donations in and around the historic area to the W&E Canal Association. An antique auto hill climb up Carrollton hill may bring the bridge’s function full circle.

Gifts of land near the bridge, to be known as “Grantham’s Landing” on the east, including the canoe launch accepted into the Wabash River Water Trail, and “Mary K’s Overlook” on the west, will serve as interpretive sites pertaining to the Wabash & Erie Canal. The area is historically significant as the only place on the canal where the main line crossed the Wabash River. In their family since the land was offered by the government in the 1830s, before the Wabash & Erie Canal was built, Dick and Polly Grantham, their daughters Susan Grantham and Janet Israel, and Mary K. Grantham-Johnsen’s sons, Curtis and Richard Johnsen of Texas, are deeding the parcels to the Wabash & Erie Canal Association. These two tracts border Towpath Road on the north end of the bridge.

During the canal era this was a bustling area. The planned signage, made possible in part by a generous gift from the Canal Society of Indiana, will explain how horses pulled boats across to re-join the towpath on the other side of the river. Descriptions also will be posted about the Mentzer Tavern, a popular canal stop-over that once stood on the Grantham land, and canal Lock #32 on the Johnsen land. Eventually a trail loop, a picnic area and parking will be available.



Montezuma Once Shipping Point by *Penny Cox*, Parke County River Commissioner

Talk concerning the possibility of dredging a shipping channel in the Wabash River brought to mind the times when the Wabash was widely used as a means of transportation.

Naturally, the Indians first used the river. The Wabash, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers were centers of Indian trade and population. This is shown by the extensive mounds built in places of easy access to water transport in many areas of the previously mentioned river valleys by the mound builders. These mound-building Indians had disappeared and been replaced by other Indian tribes by the time Europeans 'discovered' this region.

By making use of portages, Indians in the midwest area had good connections between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley.

The two most important portages in Indiana were the Portage from the Little Wabash River to the Maumee River - the site of present day Fort Wayne - thus connecting with Lake Erie, and the portage between the St. Joseph and Kankakee rivers - the site of present day South Bend - connecting with Lake Michigan.

The French explorers, priests, and traders, as well as early British and Colonial travelers, used these same routes. With greater settlement the portages fell into disuse, though the volume of traffic increased on the rivers. Most early shipments were of farm products by flatboat to New Orleans. The trip downstream was relatively simple, but a return trip by boat was difficult because of the current. Steam power solved this problem.

Launched at Pittsburgh in 1811, the "New Orleans" was the first steamboat on interior water systems of the United States. The first Wabash River steamboat was "The Florence" which started operations in the early 1800s, reaching as far north as Terre Haute. The first steamboat to reach the vicinity of Montezuma was "The Ploughboy" which made its way to the mouth of Big Raccoon Creek in 1824. In 1826 during a period of high water, "The American" went up Sugar Creek, passed over the dam at Beard's Mill, and continued as far as the mouth of Rush Creek.

Steamboat travel on the Wabash did not become common until after 1825. Steamboats gave a great boost to travel and resulted in a lowering of freight rates by one-third, but the great bulk of farm products were still carried by flatboat, as is seen by the estimate that over 1000 flatboats entered the Ohio from the Wabash in 1832. Montezuma became one of the early shipping and landing points for early flatboats and steamboats.

Travel by steamboat north of Terre Haute was often difficult because of low water and sandbars. Lafayette was usually the farthest point north that could be reached. Occasionally, Logansport was reached when the water was very high. It was this uncertainty over water levels and obstructions that furnished one of the reasons for the construction of the Wabash-Erie Canal.

More Parke County info is at: http://www.in.gov/mylocal/parke_county.htm or you can get census-type data and a map at http://www.city-data.com/county/Parke_County-IN.html .

Notes & Quotes (from Executive Director Ron James):

As any good river procrastinator will know, just because it is winter is no reason to prepare your taxes. Being as good a river procrastinator as I know, my motto on taxes has always been to hold onto my money as long as possible and “spring” the forms on the government at the last moment. Always some faint hope they’ll be too busy to cash my check. Or at the least, as Learned Hand said: “It is the duty of every citizen to so order their lives as to pay the least amount of taxes possible, indeed, their government demands it of them” or words to that effect. Regardless, with April 15 around the corner, you can all guess what I’m doing this weekend.

But, if you are filing for a small non-profit, your deadline may be still a month off! May 15th of this year is the very earliest possible deadline your small group could face under the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Under that Act, most small tax-exempt organizations, whose gross receipts are normally \$25,000 or less, must file Form 990-N, *Electronic Notice (e-Postcard) for Tax-Exempt Organizations not Required To File Form 990 or 990-EZ*. Before this law was enacted, these small organizations were not required to file annually with the IRS. The e-Postcard is due every year by the 15th day of the fifth month after the close of your tax year (usually the same as your accounting period) starting with tax years ending on or after December 31, 2007. For example, if your tax year ended on December 31, 2007, the e-Postcard is due May 15, 2008. For more: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=177783,00.html>

If only it were so easy to work with the environment. With our long winter, my usual visits to the river have been thwarted by an unusually lengthy period of flood. Our water trail access signs have been more of a hint of an eddy than usable markers for river users. But I have enjoyed trying to get to the river in between environmental events. Speaking of which, did you turn off your lights for “Earth Hour” last weekend? While getting ready for that event, or non event as the case may be, I ran across some computer energy tips that could help the earth as well as cash on hand. With this being a computer newsletter, I’ll share a few:

- * Set up your computer’s power options such that your PC goes into standby mode after 15 minutes of non use and into hibernation or sleep after 45 minutes of non use. These energy saving modes cut your PC's electric usage down to just a few watts.
- * Turn off your monitor when it is not in use. The monitor consumes over half of the energy used by a computer. Screen savers, while effective in preserving the monitor, use the same amount of energy as when you are using the computer.
- * Print only the pages you need. Printing can be the most energy-intensive step. Edit documents on-screen and use print preview to reduce the number of drafts printed. Leave your printer off the rest of the time.
- * Buy a laptop as your next PC. Laptops use 10 percent or less of the electricity consumed by typical desktop computers.

And, certainly, when you can, shut the whole thing down and...See you on the river! - Ron